



OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS STATE FIRE MARSHAL

JB Pritzker, Governor
Matt Perez, State Fire Marshal

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OSFM Reminds Illinoisans to Observe Safety Practices In and Around Water to Prevent Drowning

Each day, approximately two children less than 15 years old die from drowning

Springfield, Ill- As the summer heat continues in Illinois, pools are a favorite destination for many to cool off. It's important to follow all posted rules and pay attention to any children when around bodies of water. The number of pools installed in backyards drastically increased last year due to the pandemic. Installing a pool means adults need to be extra vigilant to protect any children who have access to the water. It is also essential to take the proper steps to keep pools secured and restrict access to prevent injuries and drownings from occurring.

"There's no single safety device or protective measure that will completely childproof your pool or spa to prevent every possible accident. To keep little ones safe, it's important to always supervise children when they are in or around a pool and know where they are at all times. Adults should join youths in the pool or remain an arm's length away in case they need help," said **Illinois State Fire Marshal Matt Perez**.

According to the American Red Cross, 69% of young children who are found drowned or submerged in swimming pools were not expected to be in or at the pool. On average, 379 fatal child drownings occurred per year between 2015 and 2017. Children younger than five years old accounted for 75 percent of these drownings, 56 percent of which were attributed to a lapse in adult supervision. Of the reported fatal drowning incidents, 71 percent occurred in residential locations, such as a child's home, a family or friend's house, or a neighbor's residence according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

Each day, approximately two children less than 15 years old die from drowning. Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death for children 1-4 years old according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Pool chemicals, like chlorine, are needed to protect swimmers' health. However, mishandling pool chemicals can cause serious injuries. Pool chemical injuries lead to about 4,500 U.S. emergency department visits each year, and over one-third of these preventable injuries are in children or teens.

The USA Swimming Foundation, in collaboration with the CPSC's Pool Safety campaign, between Memorial Day and Labor Day 2019, reported at least 150 children younger than age 15 fatally drowned in swimming pools or spas, which is up by two drownings from 2018.



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Here are some simple steps to keep children safer in and around the water:

- Install a four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate around all pools and spas. Always check to make sure the gate is locked or closed when leaving the pool or spa!
- Keep the pool and deck clear of floats, balls and toys after you leave the pool.
- Always ensure kids swim with a buddy.
- Designate an adult Water Watcher to supervise children at all times around the water. Stay off your phone, put your book down, and pay attention to whoever is in or around the water!
- Never leave a child unattended in or near water.
- Learn how to swim and teach your child how to swim.
- Learn how to perform CPR on children and adults.
- Teach children to stay away from pool drains, pipes, and other openings to avoid entrapments.
- Ensure any pool or spa has drain covers that comply with federal safety standards. If you do not know, ask your pool service provider about safer drain covers.
- Empty or flip over inflatable pools when you are finished using them for the day.

Take the Pool Safety Pledge by visiting: www.poolsafety.gov/pledge.

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